

**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 2, line 17, with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- The present invention is of a variable field of view optical system and method comprising: providing a forward curved optical element; providing a rearward optical element comprising an axially gradient index material; providing a curved focal surface; and conveying an image on the curved focal surface to a flat detector surface. In the preferred embodiment, the forward curved optical element comprises a ball lens. Conveying may comprise employing a backward curving or hollow field relay lens. Conveying may also comprise employing a plurality of optical fibers, preferably wherein the fibers are concentrated more densely in a center of the focal surface than in a periphery of the focal surface and wherein the fibers are mounted normal to the curved focal surface. ~~[[Te]]~~ The rearward optical element comprises a dynamic index material, preferably an electroactive hydrogel. The method provides simultaneous wide field of view with a lower resolution and narrow field of view with higher resolution, and employs substantially no moving parts. --

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 2, line 17, with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- The present invention preferably comprises a highly-curved optical element **12** (e.g., ball lens or ½ ball lens). The lens is preferably rotationally symmetric about the optical axis and the stop is at the center. Axially gradient index material is used in the rear lens **14** to correct the spherical aberration and axial color. The system as shown covers a 120° FOV and has a curved focal surface **16**. The curved focal surface is a problem because typical sensors are flat. To directly relay the image from the back surface of the "ball lens" to the flat detector surface, a backward curving or hollow field relay lens **18** is used. --